

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



## Lifetime Eye Care

Owner	Leslie Gallagher OD FAAO, Nicole Meerpohl, OD
Nature of Business	Optometry
City	Holton
County	Jackson
Phone	785 - 364 -5000
Web Site	<a href="http://www.visionsource-holton.com">www.visionsource-holton.com</a>
Business Structure	S Corp.
Business Began	2005, 2009 as Lifetime Eye Care
Employees	13
KSBDC Consultant	Mary Ann Riederer & Les Streit

lifetimeeyecare

**"I would encourage others to open a business if they have a product or service that is needed or desired. I would recommend careful planning with help from organizations like KSBDC, especially with business plan assistance."**



**Washburn University  
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In 2009, Doctor Leslie Gallagher and Doctor Nicole Meerpohl approached the KSBDC for assistance. After careful planning, these two optometrists, practicing independently in Holton, realized that merging their two offices would allow them to build a state of the art facility on the Holton square; and offer their patients in Holton and the surrounding communities, more comprehensive, expanded services through combined resources. Mary Ann Riederer and Les Streit, with the KSBDC, assisted them in preparing for the acquisition of funding for this project.

The doctors gave great consideration to this decision of partnering, examining every aspect before going forward. Early in the process, both even agreed that participating in personality tests would be a clear indicator for compatibility; ultimately the tests showed that their strengths perfectly compliment each other. They quickly confirmed that everything about this partnership pointed toward a successful relationship.

### Secret to Success

**"Our secret is that we truly care about each patient. Providing great service comes easy when you appreciate your patient or customer."**

**– Leslie Gallagher, Co-owner**

The design of the new office evolved naturally from the environment that the doctors desired for their patients and staff. Both beautiful and comfortable, it is built to accommodate everyone from 2 to 102-years-old. A children's corner with a 3-foot door, chalk board and toys inside, is a welcome space for little ones waiting for appointments. Investments in equipment not typically found in a community of 3,500 people were made for the benefit and convenience of the patients.

As women who grew up in small towns; the doctors believe strongly in corporate citizenship. In October, Lifetime Eye Care hosted Free Eye Health Screenings. This provided an opportunity for individuals to have a screening and during the program, several previously undiagnosed conditions were found. The program was a success and plans are to offer it annually.

Both doctors are mothers of small children, and they've personally enjoyed the benefits of this partnership built on respect and trust. Before the merger, one doctor remembers taking a two day maternity leave before returning to see patients! Now the doctors are able to spend more time with their families and a work /life balance is important to each person in the office. In addition to a professional atmosphere this office is a place where the culture is also one where strong friendships are formed. The large table in the second floor break room has become a place where birthdays are celebrated and office outings are planned.

With a truly wonderful staff and committed doctors, growth has exceeded projections, and the future for Lifetime Eye Care looks very bright!